



**THE ALMA MATER SOCIETY
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA VANCOUVER**

AMS EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Minutes of May 25, 2023

Attendance

Present: Esmé Decker (President, on Zoom from Montreal), Ian Caguiat (VP Administration), Kamil Kanji (VP Academic & University Affairs, on Zoom from Europe), Abhi Mishra (VP Finance, on Zoom from Montreal), Justin Lieu (Managing Director), Kathleen Simpson (Senior Manager of Student Services), Sheldon Goldfarb (Archivist & Clerk of Council)

Regrets: Tina Tong (VP External)

Recording Secretary: Sheldon Goldfarb

Call to Order

- The meeting was called to order at 4:05 pm (PDT) in Nest Room 3529 [7:05 pm in Montreal, 1:05 am in Europe].

Agenda

- The agenda was approved (Esmé, Ian).

Minutes

- The minutes of May 5 and May 17 were approved (Esmé, Ian).

Updates

- *Esmé's update:*
 - Very busy with stakeholder meetings for Studentcare in Montreal.
 - Sessions on mental health, insurance trends, successful negotiation tactics, branding, mitigating burnout, managing time, EDI.
 - Shared insights on the AMS's role in UBC's Academic Integrity Hub.
 - Told our referendum story re gender-affirming care; also met with the Trans Coalition about that.
 - Cool to connect with people from various schools (SFU, UVic, UNBC, Capilano).
 - UNBC wanted to know about our experiences with being unaffiliated to student alliances/federations.
 - Met with Koda Tootoosis, the Indigenous rep, about transforming the Indigenous Committee into a Constituency:
 - Sharing support and information.

- Very exciting, unprecedented.
- *Abhi's update:*
 - Also at the Studentcare conference:
 - Talked to other schools about their health and dental plans and deficits.
 - They're all working on improving their financial position.
 - Good to know we're not alone.
 - The deficits are from high utilization rates of the health and dental plan.
 - Canvas course for treasurers:
 - Good feedback.
 - We're being told it's helpful.
 - Still authorizing treasurers.
 - VP Finance caucus.
 - Spoken to managers about budget and concerns.
 - Looking at Services re costs (high), revenue (low), profits (even lower).
 - Not that the focus is on making money, but on better utilizing our funds.
 - Improving our Services.
- *Kamil's update:*
 - Academic Experience Survey report done.
 - Budget brief for Constituencies almost done.
 - Submitting feedback to UBC on affordability, etc.
 - Taking part in UBC's review of academic policies (on Senate committee).
 - One on ones with VP Academics.
 - OER Champions Night/Textbook Broke.
 - Talking to UBC about their financial aid policy.
 - Doing research into the University Endowment.
 - One-on-ones with University Executives.
 - Providing feedback on UBC's international application fee.
- *Ian's update:*
 - Executive goals draft done.
 - Talking to our Soapstand partner about a redesign.
 - Might add a beverage filling station.
 - Food labelling with the Climate Friendly Food Team.
 - Toolkit on making sustainable and healthy food choices.
 - Ticketing system contract for clubs with a new ticketing platform (Bounce) to replace Showpass.
 - Adding something to the contract to prevent endorsements during elections.
 - Southside pocket lounge renovation: \$40,000.
 - Food Bank expansion.

- Club shelves to be installed.
- Sensory rooms.
- Monthly check-ins with Resource Groups:
 - Inviting Minnie, the new Equity person, to attend.
- Clubs newsletter to update clubs.
- Introductory letter from Operations Committee.

- *Kathleen's update:*
 - Preparing for Services Presentation to Council:
 - Cost per interaction is down; budget down.
 - Peer Support: over 40% of sessions involved suicidality.
 - Sponsorship package for Food Bank.
 - Car for Food Bank.
 - Trends in Advocacy:
 - Lots more disputes related to the Centre for Accessibility.

- Kamil:
 - Re the Peer Support statistic, the Academic Experience Survey shows that 93% of the students think our mental health service is good.

- Esmé:
 - That's a stark statistic about Peer Support.
 - We should brainstorm about free services for students.

- Kathleen:
 - People wait too long before reaching out for help.

- Esmé:
 - Maybe we can do marketing to encourage people to come earlier.

- Kathleen:
 - It would be easier to handle more people with less serious concerns than fewer with more serious.

- Esmé:
 - Concordia's advocacy commissioner was talking about their robust student housing program.
 - Also co-op housing for students.

- Sheldon:
 - There was talk of us partnering with Utile, a Quebec group, about co-op housing a couple of years ago, but the project seems to have faded away.

- *Justin's update:*
 - Learning as much as I can.
 - Finding out what the managers are doing, what the pinch points are.
 - Top of mind is the budget to get a better sense of where we stand financially.
 - Looking at how feasible things are.

- *Tina's update (via Esmé):*
 - BC budget consultation:
 - Doing final draft of the longer version.
 - Presentation prep going well.

Executive Goals

- Esmé:
 - We want to be transparent about transforming our campaign platforms into goals.
 - If things are removed, we need to explain, e.g., by saying they're not feasible.
 - Want to increase transparency and accountability.

Mental Health

- Abhi:
 - Can we work more with UBC Residences about mental health?
- Ian:
 - There are counsellors in the residences already.
 - We might advocate for more use of them.
- Kathleen:
 - There's a six-week wait time at UBC Counselling.
- Kamil:
 - We need to be clear on what we're asking for.
 - Have to decide whether we're seeking more funding for our services or for the University's.
- Esmé:
 - Our social media team is making videos on tips for First Years.
 - Discussing the types of mental health services might be good for the video.
- Justin:
 - Even if the University wants to increase counsellors, it's a struggle to fill those roles.
 - If we can make a pitch to support our services, that would be a win for everyone.
- Esmé:
 - We can be truthful and say:
 - If you can wait six weeks, you can go to UBC Counselling.
 - If you want immediate support from peers, come to AMS Peer Support.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 5:08 pm (or 8:08 pm or 2:08 am).